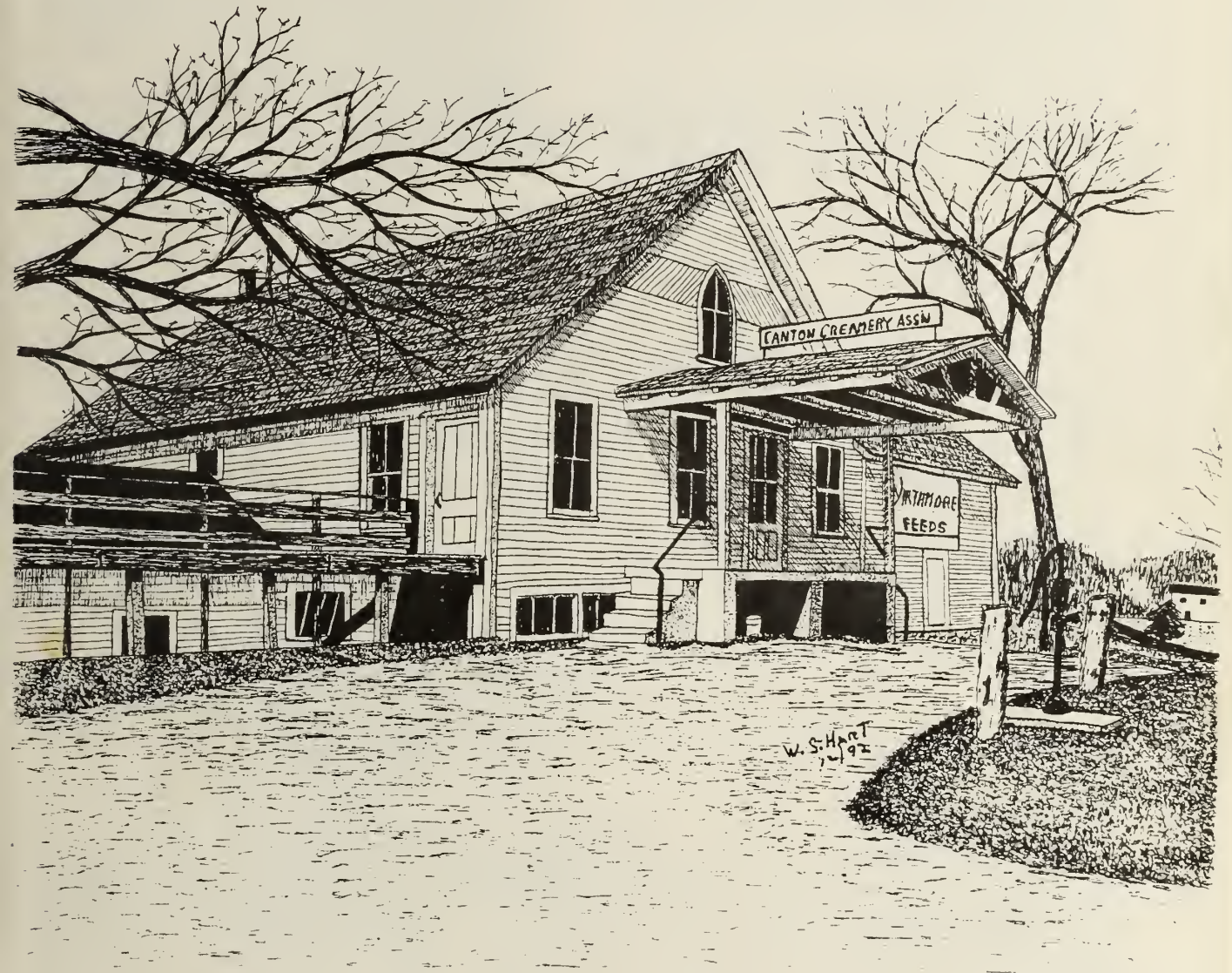


# STONE WALLS

History and Folklore



WINTER 1993

\$2.50

*last issue!*

# TO OUR READERS

This is the last time that *Stone Walls* will publish a winter issue. In the future we will publish only in spring, summer and fall.

There are several reasons for this. Our staff, as you know, consists of volunteers who are all busy people, involved in many activities besides the editing of this magazine. Proofreading, typing, editing, illustrating and doing lay-out are all time-consuming, to say nothing of the many hours spent in ferreting out new material.

We are in need of more help. We also are in need of more written matter. The last few issues have been difficult to eke out since

fewer people seem to find bits of history or folklore for us to print. This is a plea to you, our readers. We need more volunteers for our staff, and we need more contributions.

There is also the matter of finances to consider. As of January 1, 1993, the cost of postage, printing and paper will all go up. If we continue with four issues per year, we will be forced to raise the price of *Stone Walls*. By publishing only three times per year, we can leave the price unchanged.

We hope you will continue to support us as we try to bring you interesting articles about this historic area in a quality format.

—The Editors

*Cover drawing of the Canton Creamery by William S. Hart*

## STONE WALLS

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1992 STONE WALLS

# Worthington His Society

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# The Forgotten Creamery

by William S. Hart

As I write this I'm wondering whether or not the pen and ink drawing of the Canton Creamery Association building on route 179 in Canton, Connecticut, jostles the memories of other senior citizens.

Throughout New England, from the 1870's to the 1940's, local creameries were a factor. As a youth, I remember my grandfather saying, "Every dog has its day." Well, the need for creameries arose; they were useful for decades, then slowly and quietly were replaced by modern dairies.

Trying to find any lengthy written word on the industry is quite a chore. I went to several libraries and historical societies and came up wanting.

Through discovering a paragraph here and there and some anecdotes that a few interested historians gleaned from, now, very elderly or deceased individuals, I've pulled together some thoughts which might give us further insight.

In New England, after the Civil War, small dairy farms increased in number. In addition to milk, the farmers, usually their wives, would make their own cheese and butter and hope to sell or barter it.

The accepted method of processing the needed cream was to pour it into large, shallow pans and let the cream rise to the top and then skim it off.<sup>1</sup>

At the start this was done mostly in the summer months as the majority of farmers bred their herds so as to have milk during the seven spring, summer and fall months, then letting the cows go dry for the winter.<sup>2</sup>

In the 1870's and 1880's more and more farmers stored enough hay to last the winter and supplement it with grain. The silo also became popular and corn ensilage was fed throughout this cold season.<sup>3</sup>

Cream became available year around, but the quality varied from farm to farm as did the freshness. Also, each farm had to have its own butter churn.

It became increasingly practical for rural communities, having a concentration of dairy farms, to form creamery associations with farmers owning shares. The cream would be gathered from members and the butter churned at one location and then distributed to a common market.

A big help to the butter industry was the Swedish invention of a centrifugal cream separator in 1882.<sup>4</sup> By the end of the century it was refined and of such a size each farmer could have his own. This speeded up the process of obtaining large quantities of cream. A unit made by De Laval was a popular separator.



The cream was paid for by volume and its butterfat content. Jersey and Guernsey cows were noted for high butterfat. Holsteins were large volume milkers but lower in butterfat.

The Canton Creamery will celebrate its 100th birthday in 1993. It has been owned by Bob and Gloria Michaud since 1987.<sup>5</sup> This creamery has not been in active production since 1947, when it settled into supplying feed and sundries to its members. The following years eliminated the need for the association so it dissolved in 1981.<sup>6</sup>

Prior to 1893, this business was located on West Road, some two miles north from its present location. It started there in 1878, as the Mountain Spring Creamery. It lasted on that site for fifteen years until complaints of pollution forced its closing.<sup>7</sup>

Cherry Brook, at the old location, didn't flow fast enough to carry away the large amounts of skim milk and buttermilk dumped there and a buttermilk swamp ripened, leading to bacterial growth and stream pollution.<sup>8</sup>

The present building, near Canton Center, is by a section of Cherry Brook with a faster current. Also, before the railroad's demise, the Cherry Brook station for the Central New England Railroad was close by at the corners of routes 44 and 179.<sup>9</sup>

As an aside, Cherry Brook was supposedly named for a popular local Indian with a long name nobody could remember or pronounce. He was noted for getting drunk on cherry wine so they nicknamed him "Cherry" and later named the brook after him.

I have a special feeling for this old Canton Creamery as my great-grandfather, Edwin N. White, was President of the Association at the turn of the century.

The new location proved a good move as in 1895, the butter receipts totalled \$57,000. At 17 cents a pound that meant the creamery made 335,000 pounds that year.<sup>10</sup>

IN the 1920's and 1930's the demand for butter slowed down, for this creamery, so mostly milk was supplied to large Hartford dairies that had developed to supply home milk routes and commercial outlets.

Eventually this small creamery was unable to compete with the large dairies who were able to bypass the creamery and work directly

with the farmer.<sup>11</sup>

It is well worth the effort to visit this old Canton Creamery building with such strong ties to a past industry. The old butter making machinery has been removed over the years except for the large vats and a tin lined wood sink. The structure itself is in perfect antique condition and Gloria Michaud instructs a dancing school in the basement.

The Michauds have a variety of products for sale including baked hay, pet foods, live-stock feed, bird feed, bird feeders, small hand implements and an extensive and unusual line of items focusing on a bovine or cow theme such as mail boxes, yard fixtures, etc.

Some fifteen miles northeast of Canton is the small town of Granby, Connecticut. It has no existing creamery building but has fond recollections of the Granby Creamery that was in operation at 62 Creamery Hill Road.

The Salmon Brook Historical Society, at 208 Salmon Brook Street, Granby, has a tape cassette of an interview with a Mr. Harold Cotton, now deceased, who recalls his working in the creamery, as a boy, in 1904. Remember now, this was quite a while ago, Henry Ford didn't put his Model T into production until 1908.

From the descriptions given by Mr. Cotton, and others, it would appear the Granby Creamery was typical of most of the butter-making operations. With no electricity or water power the various equipment was run by a steam engine. The facility would house a boiler room and, just outside, a storage shed to hold coal or wood to fire the boiler. The cream gatherers would, with a wagon and team of horses, make their pickups at the farms along their routes.

It had always been difficult to determine the amount of butterfat in the cream and many arguments were held as to measuring it by the inch or by volume.

"In 1890 the Babcock Tester was developed. The cream sample, from each farmer, was mixed with an equal quantity of sulfuric acid, which dissolved the casein and set the butterfat free. The mixture was placed in the





### BABCOCK MILK TESTER.

machine and spun for five minutes. Water was then added and a consequent whirling forced the butterfat into the graduated neck of the testing bottle, making it easy to measure the percentage of fat."<sup>12</sup>

The cream was picked up by the gatherers in fifty-gallon barrels and, back at the creamery, was hoisted by a rope and pulley wheel up to the second floor where it was poured down chutes into a couple of four-hundred-gallon vats on the ground floor. Tubes ran from the vats to the butter churn.

A note written by Mr. Arthur Clark in May, 1975, says, "I can still see just how the creamery looked inside. There was a big churn suspended between two axles and rotated by power from a steam engine. After the cream was churned into butter, it was placed on a rotating table (also steam powered) where a man worked salt into the butter (1 ounce to 1 pound) with a long paddle. Next the butter was pressed into one-pound wooden molds, then pushed out and wrapped in parchment paper."

Mr. Harold Cotton says the churn was large enough for him to put his head and shoulders inside to scrape out all the butter.

The utensils used in butter-making had to be washed and sanitized to prevent the growth of bacteria. This was done in the

washroom next to the boiler room where hot water and steam scoured them thoroughly.

In the summer, refrigeration was a problem. Helen Howland, of Granby, recalls, "Someone's ingenuity took care of that when the creamery was built. At the end of the building was a high bank. A room was built surrounded by the bank, built in cement, top, sides and floor, with no windows. That room was so cold, summer and winter, that the temperature was always forty degrees or below. A heavy, heavy door closed the room. You shivered when you entered it."

Summer shipments had to be kept cold so the creamery had an ice house next to it which was filled during the winter with blocks of local ice (1 foot by 1 foot by 2 feet), packed in sawdust to last the summer.

The icehouse, itself, was made of double plank walls with sawdust stuffed between the walls for insulation. This type icehouse was a fire hazard as the fresh sawdust between the walls would sometimes ferment into wood alcohol and, if the summer was hot enough, spontaneous combustion would set the sawdust and building on fire.

The ice was used in shipping. The one-pound cakes of butter were put on wooden trays then shipped in wooden boxes. In the center of the shipment, a two-pound section of butter was repacked with a zinc container filled with ice.

The shipping boxes came in varying sizes. Some buyers wanted the butter in bulk and this was available in tub sizes up to fifty pounds.

A by-product of churning butter was the remaining buttermilk. For a while, buttermilk had some popularity and was shipped in ten-gallon cans to saloons and restaurants. This was very limited. Most of the buttermilk was sold back to the farmers, at a few cents a barrel, to feed livestock.

Granby Creamery had an unusual coal supply situation. Once a year they bought a carload of coal that was delivered to a siding at the Granby Depot some five miles away.

The coal had to be unloaded within two



coal car The local farmers pitched in with their teams and wagons. They made several trips between the depot and the creamery shed.

The Creamery Co-Operative Creamery Company was started on July 3, 1882. I also feel ties to this creamery as one of its first Directors was my great, great Uncle George O. Beach.

At its inception the total cost of the creamery was \$4,154.65. At the height of the business, in 1906, the company manufactured 206,000 pounds of butter. The receipts of this for \$40,000 were distributed among the farmers of Granby.<sup>13</sup>

As with most of these small businesses the changing dairy trends forced the Granby Creamery into selling out, in the late 1930's, to a large dairy, Millers Milk, in Bloomfield, Connecticut, some ten miles away.

Over the ensuing fifty odd years the old creamery building has disappeared and presently there is a modest dairy farm opera-

tion on the site.

In my mind I continue to applaud the efforts of those early people for making a living in such demanding ways and still having the strength to carry out their obligations to their families, churches, and communities.

I feel fortunate in having had the opportunity, as a teenager in the 1930's, of working on my grandfather's dairy farm in North Granby and making some contact with the roots of this long ago industry.

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# In Memoriam:

## Helena Womboldt Duris, 1903-1992

*by William S. Hart*



**Helena Duris**

This past November, the editorial board of *Stone Walls* was saddened by the loss of one of its members, Mrs. Helena Duris, at the age of eighty-nine. She had been working with us since 1978. As we accepted the news, and each went his own way, I began thinking about our loss and found my sorrow turned into pleasurable thoughts of this delightful person.

Some dozen years ago, I was doing some research of the Granville, Massachusetts area and went to the Historical Room of the Granville Library. Mrs. Duris was in charge and helped me on my quest.

I became fascinated with the knowledge and insight she had on the whole community including the genealogies of the old local families. As with other people I know, I fell

under the spell of this sincere, helpful lady. We became good friends and, through her urging, I joined the editorial board of this magazine.

Through the years, I learned she came to Granville when she was nineteen years old and fresh out of Framingham Teachers College. As a beginning teacher, she instructed the grade levels one through nine at West Granville. Over her long working career (I believe she taught until age seventy), she was assigned to Granville and Southwick and also spent several years teaching in Granby, Connecticut.

Mrs. Duris came from a family of twelve children in Newton, Massachusetts. What perfect training for handling young people. In 1930 she married Joseph Duris who, before



his passing, had been employed by the Springfield Water Works at their Cobble Mountain Reservoir location.

Helena Duris had no children of her own, but did have the benefit of close relationships with young boys and girls over a long educational career.

I've spoken with several of her former students, some of them now senior citizens, who all have nothing but love and praise for this steady, intelligent person who helped shape their lives.

Mrs. Duris became interested in the Mable Root Henry Historical Room in the Granville Library during the 1950s and was named Curator in 1968. It is worth a drive to Granville on a Wednesday or Saturday afternoon to visit the historical room and pour over the artifacts, articles, genealogies, and pictures

she was instrumental in acquiring over the last several years.

The past few months were difficult for Mrs. Duris. She was in a nursing home under medical care. When the end came, most of us felt relief that this gentle woman was at last in peace.

I'm impressed that of all the people I spoke with who knew Mrs. Duris, not one had a disparaging remark to make. Most comments were spoken in almost a reverent manner.

We will miss her quiet presence, her soft voice, and the half smile she wore most of the time.

I consider it my good fortune to have known this lovely person. I know many of us, in some small way, realize our lives are richer because of this association.



Helena just out of college

# The Water Seekers

by Kim Jensen

**Seek** (Sek) derived from i.e. base (hypothetical): sag-, to track down, trace whence L. Sagire, to scent out, perceive. 1. to try to find; search for; look for. 2. to go to; resort to. 3. a) to find out or try to get by asking or searching; b) request, ask for. 4. to bend one's efforts toward; aim at, pursue. 5. to try; attempt. 6.(obscure) - explore VI. 7. to look for someone or something (from *Webster's New World Dictionary*).

Diviner. Water Witch. Copper Wands. Pendulums. Full Moons, forked sticks cut during spring when the sap runs. Sound like something from the arcane, black arts?

The first two are old names used for people who "dowse" for a variety of items including but not limited to, water. The wands, pendulums and forked sticks are tools used by these "seekers" the world over. The success rate and accuracy of "findings" by these people are too great to be coincidental and far too interesting to be ignored.

The act of dowsing for water precedes written history; however, most of man's attempts to touch the intangible eventually become a matter of written record. One of the earliest known dowsing illustrations features a man using a forked stick to locate metal (probably gold) underground. It appears in a book dating from 1556 entitled *De Re Metallica*.

The panel, a wood-cut illustration, depicts the dowsing process start to finish. Beginning with the cutting of a forked branch, the medieval figure is followed by a crowd of amazed (or amused) spectators. He then is shown gesturing towards a spot on the ground. The final scene of the panorama is taken up with two satisfied looking fellows standing waist deep in a ditch. One figure holds aloft a tray of rocks or ore. He is grinning broadly. It must be gold!!

Books in the early centuries were scarce and

laboriously produced. Most were owned by the learned who were usually wealthy as well. These were the people who had time for pursuits other than earning their daily bread. The fact that dowsing warrants a place in a book at all may be an indication of the amount of interest generated by the subject and its usages. It also suggests the acceptance of dowsing itself as a fact, at least in the case of divining for water or minerals. Later other usages of dowsing caused it to come into conflict with the prevailing religious order of the time.

The year of 1692 gave the art of dowsing an entirely different slant in the eyes of the European public. I quote the following case from an excellent book by Joseph Baum, Berkshire native and dowser:

"A murder was committed, and the authorities, completely baffled, and without a single clue asked a local dowser to help them find the murderer. The dowser, Jaques Aymar, took rod in hand and proceeded to track down the criminal. The trail was complicated with many twists and turns, but he soon led the police directly to the hiding place of the culprit and the details in the confession confirmed in every way the exact route taken by Aymar."

Here is one for the mystery fans. What is Mr. Aymar doing? How on earth can he track the perpetrator in this manner? Even if you do not believe the stories about Mr. Aymar (and there are a few) the questions remain interesting, the answers unknown and unproven.

Jaques Aymar is an example of what can be termed "informational dowsing." This is when dowsing tools are used to gain information or facts unknown to the dowser. While Mr. Aymar is using a dowsing rod, the item generally used for this is a pendulum. A pendulum is a small weight suspended from a



string or chain. Held by a dowser in a pincer grip, it is allowed to rotate freely. The dowser concentrates, then asks a question of the pendulum either mentally or out loud. The manner in which the pendulum rotates is thought to result in a positive or negative answer.

For some people, this form of dowsing borders on a belief system rather than a hobby. They believe they are tapping into an "energy source" of some kind, with the ultimate goal of discarding tools of any sort once "in tune" with the "energy source." This is not the case with all dowsing or people who dowse, but one form which bears mention.

Informational dowsing has very surprising results as far as accuracy is concerned. Map dowsers, for instance, often use pendulums to locate water in areas they have never seen or walked through. One case of informational dowsing involved an historic home in Charlemont, Mass. where Bambi Miller resides.

Ms Miller became interested in dowsing after attending a meeting on the subject. She has been for several years a member of the American Society of Dowsers. (The Society's center is located in Danville, Vermont, where they host an annual convention each fall featuring a variety of speakers on various dowsing topics.) The pendulum is her tool of choice when dowsing, but it was her interest in the historical research of her home and its former occupants that led to her story. While researching her home, she began speculating as to what one of the lower rooms might have been used for in the past. A dowser friend was called to the home. According to the information dowsed in the room, it had been used for meetings, possibly involving the Underground Railroad. That was the extent of the information. Ms Miller continued her research of the minister who had built the house. Eventually, she uncovered an article stating the anti-slavery standing of the minister, his opinions on the subject, and the fact that he did indeed head up meetings.

This verified in part the information extracted by the dowser. Unfortunately, the article did not state where the meetings were held, but it would be impossible not to specu-

late as to whether they were held in the room of the Miller house even if it can't be confirmed. In an interesting sidelight, the date of the historic article was the same month and day as the birthdate of the dowser who did the room for her.

In the early part of this century, a German dowser believed he had found a correlation between cancer illnesses and hypothetical radiation coming from the earth, the presence of which could be confirmed by dowsing. He published a book in 1932 entitled *Earth Rays as Pathogenic Agents* and marketed a cure for them, but it was a failure. So, while his "cure" for pathogenic rays fell by the wayside, the basis of his theory did not. At present, another German physician, Dr. Hans Nieper, recommends dowsing the favorite seating areas, as well as the beds, of all his patients who suffer from multiple sclerosis in addition to more traditional treatments.

Because these noxious energies are thought to emanate from water or mineral veins, presently the method of treatment is to move the furniture to another spot.

Another researcher dowsed the beds of arthritis and cancer sufferers. He claims in 100 percent of his endeavors where there is an arthritis sufferer in the house, there is at least one vein of water crossing underneath the bed or favorite chair. He also claims the crossing points frequently correlate with the affected body part. Cancer patients tend to have many crossings under sleeping areas. In her article *Dowsing Geopathogenic Zones*, Taffy Todd states:

"We do not know if geopathogenic areas in any way cause these illnesses. Some who sleep over water veins show no signs of arthritis or cancer, but to date it has been found those who are already ill are sleeping over crossings of veins."

Is dowsing ability learned or "in-born?" Certainly age is not a factor as young children are universally sensitive. Mrs. Doris Hayden, a lovely lady who has reached the gracious age of 90, is a well-known dowser in her town of Blandford, Mass. Mrs. Hayden has spoken

on dowsing several times and has had at least one adventure video taped for posterity. Also in the interest of generations to come, Mrs. Hayden has done invaluable research on many historic sites and families in Blandford. She has also aided the Cemetery Commission using her dowsing talent to locate old unmarked grave sites. Mrs. Hayden has successfully dowsed for building foundations well over 100 years old, long after the buildings ceased to exist above ground. As an example, she cited an historic log cabin foundation circa 1793 which she was able to outline and mark. When I asked her if she was sure, "Well, water doesn't run square," was the deservedly tart reply.

When Mrs. Hayden douses she uses copper brazing rods, although bent coat hangers can be used just as effectively. Dowsing rods or "L rods" are bent into the shape of the letter "L." Loosely held in the hands by the short ends, the long portion is allowed to swing freely at waist height parallel to the ground. Sometimes the short ends are encased in hollow tubes so as to leave any human error out of the equation. The dowser proceeds forward, slowly, not lifting his/her feet too far from the ground. (Occasionally, a shuffling gait may have to be adopted.) The rods will swing completely outward or swing to cross in an "X" position by themselves at whatever point the dowser comes in contact with water...or foundations...or bodies.

The second skeptical question put to Mrs. Hayden was, "How do you know what you are finding is a grave site?" For the macabre, yes, I also asked if a site was "dug up" as proof. That elicited a soft chuckle from Mrs. Hayden. "Well, yes, in a way," was her reply. She narrated the following tale:

"You know, I always wondered for a long time how I could ever prove it. I knew I was finding something when I dowsed grave sites, but then I knew I was dowsing for graves, you see, in an area where I was sure to find them. I knew the person or persons were buried there, but sometimes the individual graves were unmarked excepting for the large central stone indicating a family

plot. That was one of the ways I helped the Cemetery Commissioners, on the grave sites. What convinced me was this... Years ago I had a dear dog, but she was getting old in years and so arthritic she could hardly stand. It bothered me to see her, so I told my husband I was going to take her to the veterinarian to be put down that day as soon as I got back from wherever I was going. Well, when I got back, the dog was gone. I knew he had taken care of it, but he didn't say a word and neither did I. I figured because of the time of year, the easiest place to bury the dog was the garden and I couldn't bring myself to eat the vegetables we grew that year. Time went by (about 30 years) and my husband had died and I got started in dowsing through my daughter. I already knew I could dowse for water and foundations (which could be confirmed) but the graves was another thing. That's when I thought of the dog, so I called my daughter and some others to come over and watch me dowse my garden. I walked it, and the rods kept crossing over a 3' x 4' area. Nowhere else. I told them to dig there. They came up with the bones of the dog, and I had never discussed it with my husband, so I really couldn't know where it was. That confirmed it for me."

It was also critical information for Mrs. Hayden's daughter, Jean York, another Blandford resident. Mrs. Hayden seems to have passed her dowsing ability on down to her daughter, which could be a viable point in the "inherent vs. learned ability" debate. Mrs. Hayden and Jean learned years afterward that Mrs. Hayden's father had dowsed a well for some neighbors.

Jean York learned dowsing from her husband. He used the "L-rod" method many times to find old buried water pipes for the City of Springfield when they renovated the Cobble Mountain Reservoir water system.

Jean has since successfully used her L-rods to find five or six sites for artesian wells. Like her mother, she can also locate graves, telling the difference between adult or child. Interestingly, the cremation method of burial does not seem to affect the locating of the site. I asked if anything unusual had ever occurred during her graveyard expeditions. Jean did



say at one time a man spotted her in the cemetery and asked what she was doing. When Jean gave her explanations, the man's eyes widened and he left abruptly. In one emergency incident in an office, Jean used paper clips bent into position in place of the rods. They worked.

Through her interests of genealogy and history, Jean came into contact with some friends out west who have located the foundations of an entire village with dowsing rods. The data is being used by their historical society.

"To those who believe, there is no need for explanation. For those who do not believe, no explanation can be explained," said Harry Houdini.

If not the first tool, the forked stick is certainly among the earliest of tools used by dowsers. It is also the simplest to procure. The rules of the game are easy. Many dowsers will swear only a certain wood works for them (willow and apple most commonly). However, any green, flexible hardwood should do. The rod is shaped like the letter "Y," stripped of small twigs and leaves, and about the diameter of a pencil. The spread of the "Y" is about the same as the "V for Victory" sign made with the fingers. Handles are grasped by the dowser in the palms up position, the stem either pointed skyward, or no lower than level with the dowser's waist. Some dowsers pull gently outward on the handles until a slight tension is felt, then proceed slowly forward as with the L-rods.

If you have the touch, the stick will begin to bob uncontrollably as it nears the water vein or site; it will twist sharply, even violently, downward over a certain point. You can back away slowly and the stick will rise to the original position on its own. There is a theory as to the number of steps vs. depth but the accuracy is debatable. (Occasionally, a dowser's stick will twist upward as well, but it is unusual.)

You can check your readings by walking a grid pattern. This also makes it possible to locate the veins of water as well as direction of the flow once you are an experienced

water-finder. The general spot where the strongest pull exists is the place where the well should be dug. Again, an experienced dowser can estimate depth, rate of flow, sometimes even purity of the water.

Many years ago, a young boy with a kinship more with nature than books left school at thirteen with his father's permission. He went to work on the family farm, helping to fell trees and do other chores on the homestead. In time he went on to serve in the Merchant Marines. He worked at a wide range of jobs, eventually acquiring a home and family. One hot, dust-laden summer, the well to the house went dry. This was a disaster for most families with four children, but not for Danny Krug of Westhampton, Mass. Ever self-sufficient, he called a well driller from Amherst, then went out and cut himself a forked branch. Although he'd never dowsed before, he began walking his yard with his children and the well driller in attendance. Shortly, he came on a spot that exuded such a dramatic amount of force, the stick twisted its own bark off. The well driller shrugged, but drilled at the spot indicated by Mr. Krug. He hit water 65 feet down with a 50 gallon per minute flow. That was 28 years ago. Today, Danny Krug is known for his lightning wit, colorful character and local sugar making operation. He is also a very adept dowser with over 20 wells to his credit. As for unusual experiences, Mr. Krug said he was once called by a doctor to dowse a bed of a patient who was ill, but he declined.

How does the quaint folklore method stack up against modern methods of well finding? What would a professional well driller think about dowsing? Kirk Henshaw from Chesterfield was kind enough to take time and share his experiences with dowsing—and his opinions on the subject. Like Danny Krug, Kirk Henshaw grew up on a dairy farm. He served in the Marines, moving with his family to Chesterfield, Mass. in 1967. He took over the well-drilling business from a gentleman who was retiring, after working with him to learn the trade. Mr. Henshaw recalled following his father, Charles, around the farm while

he dowsed with a forked applewood stick. When asked if that had anything to do with the choice of his present profession, he laughed at the irony but said, "No, it did not."

Charles Henshaw would walk at a right angle to the vein of water, and could determine the direction of flow, also the depth of a shallow well. Years later in the '70s, his deep well trial occurred in his daughter's yard. Kirk Henshaw drilled at the spot his dad marked out. I asked the result. With no hesitation, he replied, "It was 90 feet down, 5 gallons per minute." Another time, at the request of a fishing club, Charles Henshaw located two veins of water converging below the ground on the property. The outcome was a well about 80 to 100 feet down with a very large volume. In yet another adventure, a well drilling session in Leverett went bad after drilling 370 feet through rock ledge. (Ledge makes well drillers grind their teeth.) Enter Charles Henshaw with the dowsing rod. The new well was 80 feet down, flow rate 10 gallons per minute.

Kirk Henshaw patiently explained how wells are drilled using modern methods:

"After years of experience you can pretty much tell where a likely spot would be for a well. But first test sites are drilled. Gravel banks are the best, they have a high yield generally. Rock ledge isn't impossible to drill through, but it's the worst for a large volume considering a domestic water supply. I also like to see the recharge not too far from the source. Sometimes we use a plot plan when deciding where to drill a well on a property."

One unusual experience he had related to well drilling led to a story sans identifying details, of a large volume well he was drilling for public use. It did not turn out well at all. I asked if a dowser had been used. His reply was, "No, but maybe they should have!" with a suppressed smile in his voice. He cited a more recent incident involving a well he was drilling in the Greenfield, Mass. area. The people used a dowser to work in conjunction with Mr. Henshaw, and at the time of the interview he was eager to see the results of the drilling.

From a professional viewpoint, Mr. Henshaw is very accepting of dowzers, and willing to work with them. He carefully qualified his statement by saying he would not vouch for 100 percent accuracy of a dowsed site. However, if a dowser is used he feels the chances are far better than 50/50 that you'll hit water on the first try. What's more, you'll increase the likelihood of drilling a well with a larger flow and greater volume. Something to consider!

Conclusively, there is evidence that dowsing has existed and continues to exist. Results can be verified in many cases. It can be done with a variety of tools, producing more positive results than mere chance can account for.

I, for one, do not believe that the type of tool used has any bearing upon the ability of the dowser. One is as good as the other, but depending upon what you are searching for, one tool might be better than another. You may need to try more than one to find which, if any, will work for you.

What one is looking for does not seem to affect a dowser's ability, be it an animal, vegetable, mineral, or information. What makes a person a dowser? Age, race, and sex barriers are transcended by ability, giving no clue for a common factor. Simply, you either can or cannot dowse, and no one really knows why. One unexplored possibility might lie (for lack of a better term) in the degree of "open mindedness" a person has.

How or why does it work? Doris Hayden thinks it might be something to do with electricity. Sometimes her hands feel a slight "hum" in the rods. Bambi Miller and others feel it is an unseen form of energy which can be tapped. Danny Krug doesn't hesitate to voice his theory of magnetism (since it is possible to use rods to find magnetic North). Kirk Henshaw thinks the electric theory has the most credibility, remembering his ability to dowse as a boy left him after working on an arc welder for a few months. Since that time he has had other people tell him of losing their ability in this manner. It might be one, a combination, all the above, or none of the above since controlled research by many people has



proven out not a one of them.

On October 13, 1792, a brass plaque was embedded into the cornerstone of the "new" White House on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C. Our forefathers, along with some freemasons, had a grand parade to celebrate and "much drink" at a local tavern named the Fountain Inn. The plaque became lost at some point during the first century. Since then, modern methods such as x-ray and radar have been employed in attempts to locate the plaque. They even called in dowsers, but the plaque remains hidden. Dowsers, in the White House!

If you happen to take a weekend ride out to the Hilltowns, you might chance upon a woman dowsing around another white house, a medium-sized colonial I call home. Or you might catch me walking neighbors' yards, or roadside fields, forked stick in my

grasp, brow furrowed in concentration. Don't laugh. Yes, I am a "water seeker," too.

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Related reading: Kenneth Robert's biography of Henry Gross, *Henry Gross and His Dowsing Rod*. Gordon Maclean's *A Field Guide to Dowsing*.

E. H. CROSS

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**Blandford's "White Church on the Hill."**

Photo by Joyce Collins



# A Town's Special Treasure

by Barbara Brainerd

To residents of Blandford, Massachusetts, it is known simply as "The White Church," or to be more specific, "The White Church on the Hill." It sits on a small rise just a short distance up North Street where it overlooks the center of town and can be easily seen from Route 23. In 1985 this lovely old edifice was placed on the National Register of Historic Buildings, where it well deserves to be. Appearing on the town seal, the White Church has become a symbol for the town of Blandford, and it is treasured by both year-round and summer residents of this small community.

The White Church was not the first meeting house to be erected in town. As early as 1740 a building was begun to house town meetings as well as religious services. This, of course, was the custom in early New England towns. This first meeting house stood across the street from the present site of the White Church, as is acknowledged by the granite boulder which was placed there in 1903. The inscription on it reads:

Ye Old First Church  
of the Frontier Town of  
Blandford, Mass.  
Stood on this Spot  
Begun 1740 Finished 1805  
"Vox Clamantis in Deserto"

By 1799 it appears that the separation of Church and State had taken place, for in 1821 the First Religious Society of Blandford took steps towards erecting a new building for church purposes only. The record of Feb. 19, 1821, reads: "Voted to Choose a Committee of three persons to inform the other society that we wish to know whether they are willing to agree in any way with this society to join in Building a meeting House so as to accommodate Both Societys."

The "other society" referred to here was a group which had separated itself from the First Blandford church in 1799 and became known as the Protestant Episcopal Society. There was agreement between the two groups, and they resolved to build a church that could be used by both.

Selection of a site was made, and an architect was hired. He was Captain Isaac Damon of Northampton, described by Aymer Embury, II, in his book *Early American Churches*, as "best known of the country architects of his time,...an excellent draughtsman... Some of his elevations, done in India ink, are the best old American drawings that have been preserved." Isaac Damon also designed the old First Church in Springfield, Mass., as well as churches in Northampton, Pittsfield and Ware. He built bridges, too, across the Connecticut, the Penobscot, the Hudson and the Ohio rivers.

We are told that the cornerstone of the new Blandford church was laid by Isaac Damon himself on June 12, 1822. On June 17 the "raising," or erecting of the framework, was begun and it was finished on the 19th. Rev. Sumner G. Wood, in his *An Handful of Corn* gives an amusing account of this "raising." He says: "When the frame was to be raised, he [Isaac Damon] imported a sailor to manage the ropes, believing that no rustic could manage them as could one who had been rocked in the cradle of the deep. In fact, the job proved too much for that old salt. The ropes got twisted on the gin pole, the sailor could do nothing with them, and John Collester, Blandford born and bred, climbed up and straightened them."

Rev. Wood also tells us a bit about the materials used in the building. He says, "The chiseled stones of the underpinning were cut

from quarries in the vicinity of Chester or Huntington. The big beams came from Otis."

Dedication of the White Church was held Oct. 30, 1822. No full account of the ceremony has been found to date, but a brief summary exists in the records of the "Religious Society":

The new meeting hous in Blandford was sol-  
limnly Dedicated to the worship of Almighty  
God.

Prayr and Reading Appropriate Portions of  
Scriptur by Mr. D. Clark

Prayr by Rev. Mr. Mills of Becket

Sermon and Didecation prayr by Rev. Mr.  
Cooley of Grandville

To refer once more to Sumner Wood, in his *An Handful of Corn*, he details a lengthy description of the interior of the White Church as it appeared in its heyday. There can be no doubt that it was an imposing and beautiful sight. Let us look, for example, at his description of the pulpit.

The pulpit of this new 'temple of the Lord's house' was 'exceeding magfnifical.' The platform on which it stood occupied the space between the two doors at the south and adjoining the vestibule. It curved convexly at the front and was one step high. On this platform stood the pulpit, running straight across it, the front being at right angles to the sides of the platform, and was pillared and paneled form top to bottom. The desk was shaped with a swell front in the center like a great cheese-box cut diametrically in two, and extending from the floor up. It was surmounted by a pillow, on which was placed the great Bible. The floor of this pulpit was much higher than the heads of the tallest men in the congregation when standing, so that the preacher's head, when he stood, was nearly or quite on a level with the heads of the people as they sat in the front row of the gallery pews. From the depths below, the children looked up to the eminence with godly fear. To them, who never had the privilege to explore the mysterious secrets of this holy of holies, it was a matter of speculation how the minister ever got there."

Music was an important element in the worship services held in the White Church in

the last century. Records speak of a choir of eighty voices and an accompaniment of a number of instruments. Mentioned are: a flute, a violin, a bass viol and a double bass. The introduction of instruments came about following a heated argument among the congregation, some of whose older members felt that the "ungodly fiddle" had no place in the church, since it was associated with the sinful practice of dancing. In the long run these objections were evidently overcome.

Several different organs have held sway in the White Church. The first was the Johnson organ, purchased in 1867 by solicitation of funds. This organ was moved to the chapel on Main Street where it is still in use. The Deane organ was donated by Dr. W. H. Deane in 1910 and required an extension to be built on the north side of the church in order to install it. This extension was familiarly referred to as "the wart." In 1938 the Deane organ was removed, and a Hammond electric organ was installed. Oddly enough, no one seems to remember what has become of these two instruments. It is a mystery yet to be solved: what has become of the missing organs?

There is a record of extensive repairs being done to the building in 1866, but after the erection of the chapel in 1898, the White Church was used less and less. Since central heating had never been installed, it was used for service only during the summer months, while the warm chapel was the site of cold weather services and other events. By 1990 even the summer services were discontinued in the old building. Time and the severe weather conditions of the Berkshires had taken their toll. Although some efforts at repairs and restoration had been made in 1940 and 1957, serious deterioration had taken place. The front porch that once graced the building was removed, due to the rotting of the floor boards. Many panes of glass were missing from the windows. The paint and plaster of the interior walls were cracked and peeling. Probably most alarming of all, the foundation was in poor shape, and the building was jacked up and cement blocks were inserted for support.



But help was at hand! In August, 1992, a group of interested people got together and decided that action was need to restore this historic landmark to its former beauty and eminence. The group consisted not only of church members, but also of full-time and summer-time residents of Blandford. Their first action was a fund-raiser, whereby forty-nine volunteers parked cars for visitors to the Blandford Fair and earned nearly \$3400.00. A chicken pie supper at the chapel brought in another \$1000.00. As a result, it was possible to pay for work to have the church's foundation made once more secure.

But there is much more to be done. An architect has been hired to supervise the restoration process, and he estimated that between \$175,000.00 and \$250,000.00 will be needed to defray all costs. Plans are now under way to help raise this considerable number of dollars. A series of events are being organized for the weekend of July 24 and 25, 1993. This will be known as a Back-to-Blandford Weekend and will focus on the White Church as its pivotal attraction. In-

cluded will be tours of old houses and old cemeteries, an auction featuring Blandford memorabilia, a luncheon in the Agricultural Hall on the fairgrounds, and various displays at such places as the library and the Historical Society building.

In the meantime, contributions are gratefully accepted, and any of our readers who would like to assist in any way, by offering help or by donating financial aid, may do so by contacting the following:

White Church Restoration Committee  
P.O. Box 65  
Blandford, MA 01008

The above committee is chaired by Sumner Robbins, who is a deacon in the church, and is co-chaired by Ann Southworth. We wish them the best of luck in restoring Blandford's White Church to its former glory.

*Editor's note: the historical data in this article was supplied by documents assembled by Doris Hayden and now in the records of the First Congregational Church, Blandford. Thanks to Deacon Sumner Robbins for allowing their use.*



Photo by Joyce Collins

# Those Old School Days

by Alta Crowley

*Editor's note: Many of you Stone Walls readers are familiar with the poems of Alta Crowley that have been printed in past issues.*

*Miss Crowley was graduated from New Britain Teachers College in 1938. This is now called Central Connecticut State University. After 42 years of teaching in three schools in the Bristol school system, she has retired. The old expression "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree" bears fruit, for Alta now lives in a converted schoolhouse in Burlington, Ct.*

Ringling an old handbell out of an open window to call children in from recess was certainly never part of my plans when I graduated with a degree in education, ready to start a teaching career. Mentally I was determined to meet and overcome all problems and obstacles. I was a great success until my first hour on the job.

In 1938, teaching jobs were scarce. I considered myself fortunate to have a kindergarten position in the Sarah E. Reynolds School in Forestville, Conn., a part of the Bristol school system. I had a large room next to the first and second grades in an old wooden building. A nearby brick building housed grades three through eight. The principal was also in charge of another school which required him to "cross town" to be in an office there. We teachers soon found that many decisions were ours as the principal could not be in two places at once.

In my small building I had the only telephone which made me a go-between for the office in the brick building and the other two grades. The basement of the building was unfinished and people referred to the building as the "portable." We had to go outside and walk to the office or the other grades.



Alta Crowley

The first school day found eager mothers and children arriving much before opening time. Some children had been registered at the office while others had not. I soon found myself a registrar. In a few cases the older brothers or sisters brought in a child with no information but the explanation that Mother was at work and that the child was to "start kindergarten." I found myself overwhelmed with parents, children, the ringing telephone, first-day crying and questions.

Finally, I found time to act like a teacher, acquaint the children with each other, the building, the facilities and general rules, and to learn names that went with faces. It was no small task. I also found that I was to supervise the lavatory and at times the playground, plus sometimes ring the recess bell.

A bottle of mercurochrome and some band-aids comprised our first aid kit. We applied either or both when needed. There were never



any questions or repercussions in the area. All was accepted. Many parents knew the teachers and their families. Some were personally involved outside of school. Parents had faith.

In addition, I, upon dismissal, walked children to the main road where I became a crossing guard.

My salary for the year was eight hundred dollars.

We teachers just went from day to day doing the best we could with what we had. We never used words like "rights," "benefits," "discrimination," "free time," or "free planning periods." Most of us were content with our lot. Right or wrong, that's the way it was.

The school buildings were later torn down. With them went a unique way of life that will never return or be duplicated again.

## Gram's Aprons

by Alta Crowley

Washed and ironed and then put away,  
Gram's aprons were ready, one for each day.  
The checks, the solids, and the flowered ones, too,  
A choice for whatever she wanted to do.

The "chores" apron was faded and torn,  
Just for cleaning and working it would be worn.  
The everyday ones would be handy for "  
Just in case someone comes to the door."

The pretty ones worn for Sunday best,  
Getting dinner while wearing her church dress,  
Another one worn for her company,  
The times when lady friends came to tea.

Most aprons were cut and sewed by hand,  
A few were gifts, some, made by Gram.  
Layers of aprons put carefully away,  
An important part of Gram's every day.

W. S. H.

# Winter Moonlight

by W. S. Hart

A chilly wind is blowing hard  
This February night.

The moon is full and very near,  
The land is bathed in light.

Some rubbing branches overhead  
Give off a gentle squeak  
That seems to complement the sounds  
Of water in the creek.

The moonlit limbs their shadows make,  
Black on the crusty white,  
And as they move in every way  
It makes an eerie sight.

The pond nearby is frozen thick,  
Upon it not a track,  
And if you listen through the wind  
You just might hear it crack.

It won't be long, a month or more,  
This frigid scene will go;  
The snow and ice will disappear,  
Again green things will grow.



# Apples in Winter

by W. S. Hart

Some summer sun gets stored within  
The apples on a tree,  
And during cold and snowy months  
I bring it back to me.

A simple bite brings great delight,  
Recalling times gone by;  
Of warmer days and quiet nights  
And sunshine in the sky.

I can recall the smell of soil  
Just sprouting with new seeds,  
And think of all the heavy toil  
To meet a farmers needs.

Next time you try this tasty fruit  
Remember what I say,  
And maybe thoughts will come to you  
To brighten up your day.



# Commuter Village Recoups from Mill Town Disasters

by W. R. Pierce

*The following article was first printed in the Springfield Republican in early 1967. It details the ups and (mostly) downs of employment opportunities in nearby Hinsdale; a story similar to those of many a New England village.*

Hinsdale is growing again, after the loss of its textile industry, most of its large dairy farms and the shouldering of a staggering welfare burden. In 1885, when the Hinsdale Bros. Woolen Co. and A. E. Parish Mill employed hundreds, the community's population was 1750.

It was a boom village. Then, a series of disasters struck.

After slumping at one point to 1250, the population today is on the increase again. It now is officially listed at 1458, but the residents are no longer millworkers and farmers.

They are commuters, driving to places like the General Electric Co. in Pittsfield, Crane & Co. in Dalton, and as far away as the aircraft and engine plants around Hartford, Conn.

The last of the mills, after faltering years, fell under the crushing blow of the depression Jan. 1, 1930, throwing 200 hands out of work. After that, Hinsdale became the most relief-ridden town in the state.

At one point, the town was spending approximately 30 percent more for welfare than it did for schools. The late William Doherty, then clerk of the board of selectmen, said the main factor was that many unemployed millworkers remained in the village, rather than look elsewhere for work. At the same time, agriculture crumbled. Many of the big dairy farms were squeezed out of existence. The monuments of the past are the tumbled down, uncared-for farms which mark Hinsdale's outlying areas.

## What Happened?

The Hinsdale Mill, which followed the same pattern as other town industrial firms, was incorporated in March, 1836 by William Hinsdale, son of Rev. Theodore Hinsdale, after whom the community was named in 1804. The firm originally was called the Hinsdale Manufacturing Company. D. M. Hinsdale, William Hinsdale and Fredrick Curtiss were principal stockholders.

In 1845, Hiram Richards built another woolen mill nearby, which was purchased by the Hinsdale firm during the Civil War.

Forty years later, the Woolen Mill company was formed after a reorganization of assets by Franklin and James Hinsdale, sons of William Hinsdale. That year, the firm had 250 permanent, fulltime employees and manufactured 17 sets of cards and 67 broadlooms.

Accounts of that day say the materials were equal to or better than the best imported goods and many of the nation's leading citizens were proud to wear clothes manufactured from Hinsdale textiles. The company at that time boasted two stone and one large frame structure with accessory buildings such as storehouses, dying houses and tenements.

The town had 12 public schools in 1895, mostly of the one-room variety. There were 405 pupils enrolled in the system and 21 teachers were employed. The community also boasted three churches, the public library, ten stores, a grist mill, three woolen mills, two blacksmith shops, two livery stables, a basket shop, a wagon shop and 150 dwellings.

Most of the wool for the Hinsdale mills was



purchased in Boston, but the booming industrial climate also had its effect on local farmers. Much wool was bought in the area, and a farm operated by Walter Tracy once had 2000 sheep and 800 lambs.

Shortly after the turn of the century, the Hinsdale brothers sold the mills. Various firms then operated them during a steady decline. After 1907, blankets were manufactured there and during World War I there was a temporary boom filling orders for the Army. Later, Strong-Hewet Co. of Adams took control and the manufacture of materials for fine suits was resumed.

In 1924, six years before the business died, the firm's tenement houses were all sold. In most cases, they were purchased by mill families who had lived in them all their lives and were reluctant to leave. The mill doors were closed for the last time in 1930 and in October of the following year the property was purchased by Carl Lindholm.

The Pittsfield contractor soon began tearing

down the large stone mill on Main St. The machinery had been removed earlier, and the windows were broken by children. It was only a skeleton to remind townspeople of more prosperous days and an eyesore to outsiders entering town from the west by automobile and train.

Lindholm also razed the Parish Mill and smaller company buildings. The mill office, however, was purchased by William Richmond, who converted it into a home. A building which survived is the brick house currently occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Carl A. Wallin, Sr. It stood across the street from the principal manufacturing building. It housed the mill superintendent and his family and was one of about 40 dwellings owned by the company.

The industrial revolution in Hinsdale started five years before the founding of the Hinsdale Co., in 1831. In that year Carl A. Plunkett founded the Plunkett Woolen Co. It too had a long and prosperous history until



HINSDALE BROTHERS, WOOLEN MILLS

the first quarter of the 20th Century.

The mills were located on the banks of the Housatonic River where there was ample water power. The coming of the Boston & Albany Railroad provided a quick route to the east's major markets. The roadbed was laid along the banks of the river, beside the mills.

In addition to textiles, the community for many years was a woodchopper's paradise, because of a refuelling stop for the wood-burning locomotives. Many times there were hundreds of cords of wood stacked along the railroad.

The community also was a national leader in the shipping of Christmas trees and evergreens. A bed of rich peat was discovered and exploited. There was also the W. R. Botum Saw and Grist mill. Wages were not high, but there was employment security and Hinsdale was the envy of many Western Massachusetts towns and cities. It became a railroad center and until 20 years ago had a tower to control its many switches. Sidings mushroomed to many parts of the town, and during the depression there was room for the railroad to store many of its unused freight cars. Today there are just two main lines, one east and one west.

When the mills called it quits, unemployment nearly strangled Hinsdale. The tax rate rose to such an extent, it discouraged new industry from locating in the town.

Now Hinsdale no longer depends on industry. Its residents have been given an additional shot in the arm as summer cottages and boys' and girls' camps go up at Ashmere and

Plunkett Lakes. The camps annually house an estimated 1000 boys and girls for an eight-week period from mid-June to mid-August.

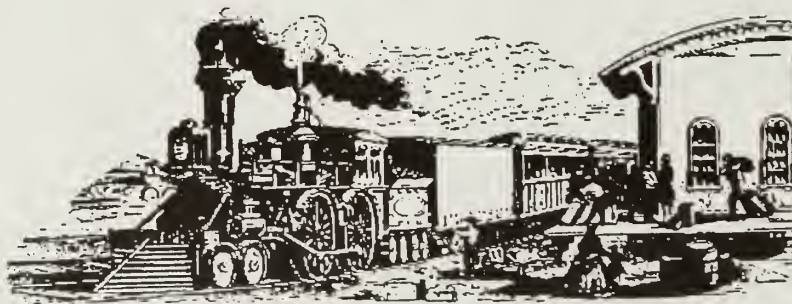
Residents still feel they pay more than their fair share of taxes, but the rate dipped in half recently as property was re-evaluated and assessments made.

Oldtimers say industry failed because it did not keep up to modern manufacturing methods and could no longer meet competition.

Nearby Dalton, on the other hand, once smaller than Hinsdale, now has a population of about 7500 and continues to be an industrial leader. There the community grew with the Crane & Co. paper firm, still a leader in its field, which keeps up with the latest industrial developments. Crane & Co. is now in the midst of a multi-million dollar modernization program which will take seven years to complete.

This Crane & Co. modernization, along with employment increases at the G. E. plant in Pittsfield, has kept Hinsdale on the map.

*In the 25 years since this article was written, the population of Hinsdale has continued to rise, sitting now at just about the 2000 mark. Most of this increase, however, is due to the inexorable march to the suburbs, and represents people siphoned off of Pittsfield and its environs. G. E. Transformer Division has gone the way of the woolen mills, and one of the mentioned camps, Lenore, has also vanished, becoming an upscale housing development, though not yet completed. Many of the run-down outlying farms are now beautifully restored. Employment opportunities in general have suffered a net loss in the region over the past two and one half decades.*





# Lucelia Cook's Diary

*in possession of Edward F. Cook of Blandford*

## Family outline:

Lucelia Cook, dau. of Levi & Harriet Osborn Sizer

1st m. Richard Karr

by him had:

Wallace V.

Willis Levi

m. Berdella Chapman

m. Daisie Wyman

2nd m. Horace Burdette Cook

by him had:

Frank Burdett

(father of Edward F. Cook)

Naomi Lucelia

m. Ethel Blodgett

m. Fred Chapman

*(The spelling in the diary has not been touched as it is rather picturesque.)*

## January 1893

**Sunday 1** Snowed at first and then turned and rained it all off. I have learned to play "Hold the Fort" today. Have read the 2nd chapter of Collissions. Burdett has been over to S. Bodurtha's & Cooley's.

**Monday 2** Pleasant & warm. I have washed & ironed, moped the floors, baked cookies & tarts, fried a pan of doughnuts, pared pumpkin for pies. Ed Osborne has been down after his 4 sheep. Wallace & Frank have been to school.

**Tuesday 3** Very cold & pleasant. Baked a loaf of jelly cake to carry tonight up to Almon Smith's party but it was not very good. So I baked another loaf of cake & some cup cakes & we all went up this evening. Did not get home until 2 o'clock in the morning. They danced.

**Wednesday 4** Been sewing on my night dress & went to bed a little while, my head was so dizzy.

**Thur. 5** Snows. Churned & moped the floor & finished both my night dresses. Worked some on Mother's apron. Let out the cattle & cleaned part of the stable. Burdett has helped Mr. Bates butcher a beef today.

**Friday 6** Made six balls of butter & worked most of the time on Mother's apron. Got the meat ready to cut for sausage & Burdett cut it up this evening & I seasoned it & pared some applies for pies.

**Saturday 7** Baked pies, fried some doughnuts & baked cookies, moped the floor & finished Mother's apron. Mended stockings in the evening. Clair Bates came home from school today, has been here & Wallace down there this eve.

**Sunday 8** Willis has been home. Staid to supper & Wallace has been to meeting & Burdett went up to the quarry with Willis. Pearl has been up after the mail.

**Monday 9** Snows. I have washed & moped, played on the melodion some, mended

Burdett's overalls & began a mitten for Frank. Wallace has started to go up street to school & board at Father's.

**Tuesday 10** Cold & blustering. I have churned & worked over my butter & made 4 balls. Got my cloths in & dried them by the fire & ironed them, mended the lining to a coat for Frank & knit some.

**Wednesday 11** Cold & windy & the snow flies again today. Anthony & Chaffee have been here today. Got a little load of hay at the Warfield barn. I have baked bread & finished Frank's mittens. Knit one whole one. B. has been up to Almon's with 10 lbs. butter.

**Thur. 12** Cold day. I have darned the stocking & done the barn chores for Burdett has been over to Wyman's with the oxen to get them shod & got our stove from Mr. Boise. Cost 15 dollars. I have begun Naomi a mitten today.

**Friday 13** Cold. Begun braiding a mat. Uncle Anthony came down after another load of hay & was here to dinner & B. helped him load it. I have knit some on Naomi's mitten. Wallace came home tonight from school at the street.

**Saturday 14** Moped the floor, finished one mitten for Naomi & began the other. Washed & ironed some & this evening fried a pan of doughnuts & baked 3 mince pies. Burdett has drawn a load of hay for Anthony & went up town & got a bbl. of flour.

**Sunday 15** Been a very cold week. Ripley cow got hurt yesterday. Wallace has been up to Almon Smith's & has gone over to Father's again tonight. Snows a little & blows it as fast as it comes.

**Monday 16** I have washed & ironed what got dry, moped the floors & done the barn chores this noon. Burdett has drawn a load of hay today for Anthony. He came down this morning & helped load it.

**Tuesday 17** Finished ironing and churned & worked over the butter once & mended a mitten for B. Fried some doughnuts & braided on a mat the rest of the time. Blacked the stove. B. has gone up town this eve.

**Wednesday 18** Warmer. Moped the floor, made 3 balls of butter & 1 table cake & been

braiding on my mat. Anthony was here to dinner, down after hay. I got a letter from Ida Stearns today & one from Delia & she sent me a picture of Emma's husband, Herbert Smith.

**Thur. 19** Pleasant. Pared applies for pies & some more & stewed & canned 3 cans. Done the mending & darned the stockings. Anthony has been down after his last load of hay. Burdett has been drawing sap wood. Har-nessed Dan today.

**Friday 20** Cold & windy. Baked bread & 1 loaf of raised cake & 4 apple pies. Cut over a pair of stockings for Frank that Mrs. Perkins gave me. Been at work on my mat. Got a pullet egg today. Been cold & windy. Peebles girls came home today.

**Saturday 21** Cold day. Moped the floor & been at work on my mat. Burdett has been up town with Mr. Bates today & got 2 boxes - one from Ellen & one from Ida Stearns & Ellen sent me a nice teapot and vinegar cruise.

**Sunday 22** Willis is home today. Came last night. Been down to Mr. Bates a while & I have written to Ida Stearns, Delia & Ellen today & I sent them up by Willis. Burdett has been down to Mr. Bates this evening.

**Monday 23** Cloudy. Snowed a little. I have baked 4 pies & fried some cakes. Made a bag & put my sausage into it. Made some head cheese. Worked on my mat. Burdett has been up to the sap place chopping up wood.

**Tuesday 24** Very warm & pleasant. I have been at work on my mat today & churned & worked over my butter. Got 7 lbs this time. Had a sleigh ride tonight. We all went down to Mr. Cooley's & spent the evening. Wallace is at Father's going to schol. Letter from Ellen tonight.

**Wednesday 25** Snowed a little. Have washed & ironed the coloured cloths & dressed 4 hens & moped the floor. Let out the stock & cleaned the stable. Pared apples for pies. Burdett has been up town. Got Naomi a pair of shoes.

**Thur. 26** Pleasant & warm. I have baked 4 pies & some cookies, fried some doughnuts & done the barn chores this forenoon & this afternoon. Washed & ironed. Cloths got dry. Wet up bread & cut turnips tonight. Burdett



has cut some trees for the kitchen floor boards.

**Friday 27** Pleasant. Mr. Cooley has worked here today for Burdett, chopping & sawing trees. I have baked bread & done the barn chores. Ironed some coats, darned the stockings. Played some. Wallace rode home tonight with Pearl.

**Saturday 28** Pleasant. Moped the floor. Braided some on my mat & picked over the turnips & Wallace & I have brought them all out of the cellar, they were so rotten. Burdett has been drawing logs across the river.

**Sunday 29** Rainy. Cot 2 lambs this morning. I have played some & read some. Has been raining some today. Burdett & Wallace have been looking over the line fence with Isaac Richards. Wallace wrote to Clair.

**Monday 30** Pleasant. Washed & ironed, moped the floor, & churned & fried some doughnuts. Had griddles for dinner. Wallace did not go to school today. Got another lamb. Burdett has been cutting & sawing more logs. Mr. Cooley has helped him. Bill Champlin has been here this forenoon.

## February 1893

**Wednesday 1** Cloudy all day. Burdett has worked today for Mr. Cooley & I have had all the barn chores to do. Frank is most sick today. We have got 2 more lambs - makes 6 now, so I have been down to the barn 3 times today.

**Thur. 2** Cloudy all day. Snowed a little last night. I have picked over all of our apples today & Mrs. Bates has been here this afternoon & staid to tea. I made biscuit & had some peach sauce. Worked on my mat some. B. has gone up town this eve. Surprise party at the hall last night for Fred Hart.

**Friday 3** Rained hard this forenoon & then cleared off & is growing colder. I have made up the best bed & blacked the sitting room stove, swept out the room & played some. Finished my mat today. Wallace school out tonight.

**Saturday 4** Blustering & cold. Baked bread & a loaf of raised cake, cookies & fried some cakes, moped the floor. Soldered 2 teapots & 4 pans, mended a coat for Frank & his mittens.

Burdett has been to Mr. David Bodurtha's funeral this afternoon.

**Sunday 5** Pleasant & warm. I done up my work & played quite a while. Clarence & Pearl were up here this forenoon. They all went into the sitting room while I swept out in the other rooms. Willis did not come home.

**Monday 6** Snowed a while this morning & then turned to rain & has rained hard. Burdett drew 2 loads of logs & got back home at 2 o'clock. I have begun another mat. Wallace has done the barn chores & cut some wood.

**Tuesday 7** Pleasant. Burdett & Wallace have worked for Mr. Bates today stripping tobacco. I have done the barn chores & down to the sheep barn twice. Washed & ironed, moped the floor, churned & worked over the butter once. Thawed the snow most all off. Icy.

**Wednesday 8** Cold & pleasant. Burdett has worked again today for Mr. Bates & has gone up town with Pearl this eve to carry our butter & eggs. I have helped Wallace do the barn chores. It is so icy. He has worked a while at Mr. Bates. I have been at work on my mat. Made 7 balls of butter.

**Thur. 9** I have baked 2 squash pies & 1 apple pie. Fried six pies & a pan of doughnuts. Arvid Chapman was here a while this forenoon. His horse run away from him & stopped here. We have set our new stove this afternoon. I have run 1 doz. candles.

**Friday 10** Baked bread, scoured up the floor & scoured & cleaned up a little pot to go on the new stove. Braided some on my mat. Wallace has been to Mr. Bates. Rained hard this forenoon & then cleared off. B. has been over to the soapstone quarry.

**Saturday 11** Cloudy. I have baked apple pies, 2 squash pies & 1 loaf of cake. Moped the floor. done up a fine shirt for Burdett & 1 for Wallace. Made Naomi a pair of stockings & Frank a pair. They have all been down to the sap place this afternoon chopping wood.

**Sunday 12** Very warm & pleasant & most all bare ground. Seems like spring. Willis has been home today. Staid until evening. Nel King & Jack Lindsay have been here & Arloe Smith came in the evening after I had gone to bed.

**Monday 13** Snowed all day & hailed. I have made some doughnuts & Wallace churned & I balled the butter & have been mending & fixing all day. Burdett & Wallace worked at the sap place this forenoon. We have got another lamb.

**Tuesday 14** Pleasant & warm. Got a pair of twin lambs & 1 died. I have been at work on my mat all day. Have had an awful headache this three days. Burdett went down to the corner & up to Mrs. Griswold's this forenoon breaking out the road.

**Wednesday 15** Pleasant & warm. I have washed the coloured clothes & ironed them, moped the floor, baked 4 pies, 1 loaf of cake, some ginger cookies & fried a pan of doughnuts. Put one black braid around my mat.

**Thur. 16** Written to Delia & worked on my mat the rest of the time. Leon brought down my new pot, it cost \$1.00. Got 7 eggs today. Got 16 lambs now - 3 came today & 6 yesterday. Pearl & Wallace have gone up town tonight.

**Friday 17** Washed the white clothes & ironed them. Pared apples for pies, moped the floor, wet up bread, worked some on my mat. Went down to the sheep barn. Burdett has been drawing logs all day to the mill. Snows again tonight.

**Saturday 10** Snowed all day. Clair & Pearl have been here this afternoon & Leon this eve. I have baked bread & pies, 1 loaf of cake. Boiled supper in my new pot for the first time. Mended a pair of pants for Burdett that Ida sent him & darned the stockings.

**Sunday 19** Burdett has been up to Uncle Anthony's today & Wallace to A.J. Smith's. I have been down to the sheep barn twice. The snow is quite deep. I have played some. Burt Fanning & family were at Father's today.

**Monday 20** The wind blows & the snow flies a perfect gale today & is all drifting up. Snowed again last night. I have had a fire in both rooms all day & it is so cold I have worn my bonnet all day & a shawl part of the time. Got 9 eggs today and only 13 hens.

**Tuesday 21** Pleasant. Burdett has churned & I have worked over the butter. Had 7 balls. Moped the floor, & been at work on my mat.

Pearl has been here this evening. Burdett has broke out the road down the hill - all drifted up.

**Wednesday 22** Snowed again today - all day & drifted all the while as it came down. I have baked 3 pies, 1 loaf of cake & fried a pan of doughnuts & worked on my mat. Baked meat for supper & had beans, squash & turnip.

**Thur. 23** Have washed this afternoon. Did not put out the white cloths - it was late & not pleasant. Worked on my mat this evening. Burdett has been across lots with the oxen up to Almon Smith's today for the first time this winter. Drifted all up again. Got a letter from Delia today.

**Friday 24** Got my white cloths out & dried & ironed. Pearl came up this morning to shovel snow & they all went at it. Got it done so Burdett took the oxen & went down through to Mr. Bates. L.B. Shepard is to be buried tomorrow.

**Saturday 25** I have baked bread & 4 pies, moped the floor & worked on my mat & darned the stockings. Burdett has been up town with Mr. Bates this afternoon. Bought me 4 yards of gingham for aprons. Wallace has gone to Almon's this eve.

**Sunday 26** Willis has been home today. Did not expect him it was so bad going. Was going to ride up with Almon & rode into the Hollow with Joe Moore. I have churned today.

**Monday 27** Washed & ironed & fried some doughnuts. Mended this evening. Pearl has been here this eve. Burdett & Wallace have been at work at the woodpile & B. has been to Mr. Bates.

**Tue. 28** I have baked 4 pies & 1 loaf of cake, moped the floor. Finished my mat today. Burdett & Wallace have been breaking out the road all day & B. has been down to Mr. Bates this eve.

## March 1893

**Wednesday 1** Pleasant and not very cold. Burdett has chopped at the woodpile this afternoon & mended shoes & fixed a shovel this afternoon & Wallace chopped this after-



noon & been down to Mr. Bates this afternoon & up to Almon's this eve with Pearl Bates. Mrs. Cooley has the pneumonia.

**Thur. 2** Been mending all day. Has been a very cold, blustering day & drifting all up worse than ever. B. & Wallace have sit in the house all day, only at chore time. Wet up bread tonight. Baked biscuit for supper. Snowed some.

**Friday 3** Moped the floor, baked 4 apple pies, pared the apples for them, baked bread, fried a pan of doughnuts, finished mending Burdett's overalls. Wallace has gone up to Frank Barnes with Pearl to a party. I watered the cows today.

**Saturday 4** Baked some ginger cookies, moped the floor, made Naomi a pair of drawers, myself an apron. Fixed my gray basque larger, & this evening began to work on the bedquilt that Ida Stearns began for me. The Bates boys have been here this eve. Last night Wallace & Pearl went up to Frank Barnes to a quilting party.

**Sunday 5** Windy & the snow blowing & drifting. Clair called here tonight & he & Wallace have gone up to Almon Smith's this eve & Wallace has been up there before today and got me a letter from Mrs. Warfield.

**Monday 6** Pleasant. Done the washing & ironed what got dry. Did not put out the white cloths was so windy. Mr. Bates has been up to town meeting with Burdett. I have churned.

**Tuesday 7** Finished ironing, baked 4 pies, 1 loaf of cake & some cookies. Worked over butter, mended some, begun my gingham apron - brown and cross-stitch-like. Mrs. Griswold, Leon & Pearl have been here this evening. Naomi is about sick with a hard cold.

**Wednesday 8** Burdett & Wallace have drawn 2 loads of hay for Mr. Bates & went up town this afternoon. Wallace got him a pair of rubber boots. I have done the barn chores & put on new papers onto the buttery shelves, scoured the kitchen floor, wet up bread.

**Thur. 9** Rains today. Baked bread & mended some & worked on my apron. Wrote to Delia. Frank Atwater was to be buried today, had the pneumonia. Burdett has been to Mr. Bates & Wallace up to Almon's. They are

at Simsbury.

**Friday 10** I have stirred butter & pared apples (the last I have got) made 7 pies, got a box ready to send Delia by Mr. Bates & I went down there with it. Got my feet wet as sop. Burdett & Wallace have been chopping & W. has gone off this evening with Leon & I weighed 148 lbs. Mr. Bates weighed me.

**Saturday 11** Baked 1 loaf of cake & ginger cookies, moped the floor, made 6 balls of butter, cut out some blocks, & worked on my apron some. Rains again tonight, been foggy all day. Naomi coughed all night most.

**Sunday 12** Wallace has been up to Almon Smith's with 8 lbs. butter & 1½ doz. eggs & over to Father's. Burdett has been to Mr. Bates & got his hair cut & from there down to Sam Cooley's. Gone all day. I have lain abed.

**Monday 13** Washed & ironed & moped the floor. Helped move the old stove into the shop. Washed the windows some, swept all out upstairs, balled 2 table cakes of butter. Frank is about sick tonight with a hard cold. B. has gone to Champlin's & Wallace to Bates this evening.

**Tuesday 14** Baked 2 pies & made some fried cakes. Moped the back room floor, brought up the hams & set to soak & what cucumbers I have got. Mrs. Bates called - was going up to Almon's. B. has taken down our sap buckets.

**Wednesday 15** I finished my brown gingham apron this forenoon & this afternoon run 3 doz. candles, made 7 for Frank. Burdett & Champlin have been drawing logs today. Cold & blustery. Had a thunder shower in the night - last night.

**Thursday 16** Mended stockings & made a loaf of ginger bread. Got a letter from Delia. Ruth & Ruby called here. They went down to Mrs. Bates. Burdett & Wallace have been drawing logs. Clarence Bartlett is very sick with pneumonia.

**Friday 17** Moped, churned & worked the butter once, & baked 4 pies, made Naomi a pair of stockings. Frank has not been out today, got such a cough. Mrs. Bates & Mrs. Champlin have been up to Mrs. Griswold's a visiting. Wallace has gone to John Peebles party.

**Saturday 10** Baked 2 loaves of cake and frosted one, moped the floor, baked ginger cookies. Clair & Pearl have been here this evening. Burdett has been up town. I have washed the sap buckets.

**Sunday 19** I have been up to Mrs. Osborn's to see her a little while & called at Mrs. Griswold's. Willis has been home & Clair has been here & this eve. Wallace has gone up to Mr. Smith's & B. to Bates. Inez & Ruth & Ruby were here. Leon worked for Burdett a while yesterday.

**Monday 20** Washed & ironed, baked a loaf of jelly cake & put chocolate between it & fried a pan of doughnuts, moped the floor. Looked for Inez Wyman & the Smith's this evening but they did not come. Jack Lindsay was here to dinner.

**Tuesday 21** Burdett set some trees yesterday, the first. I have baked bread & 6 pies, cut out Frank a pair of pants & partly made them. Wallace & Pearl have gone to Almon Smith's this eve.

**Wednesday 22** I have moped the floor & finished Frank's pants. Uncle Anthony & Mrs. Perkins came down today & he has been hooping up 50 buckets of Beard's for Burdett & Burdett has been to the mill today.

**Thur. 23** I have been mending Wallace a vest & my rubber shoes & pieced some on my quilt that Ida begun for me. Anthony came down again today & Burdett has been at the mill. Snows most all day.

**Friday 24** Baked biscuit for supper. Washed some buckets. Was going to Mrs. Bates to get my dress cut but she was sick so I did not go. I got a letter today from Ida. She has had her jaw part taken out. Had a tumor.

**Saturday 25** Baked 4 pies, 1 loaf of cake & frosted it. I made cookies, churned & worked

over the butter. Made 4 lbs. Moped the floor & worked on my quilt. Burdett has gathered some sap today. Mr. Champlin & wife called here. Were going to Almon's & Wallace has been up there. He is 15 years old.

**Sunday 26** B. & Frank have been to the sap place & Willis came home last night. Arloe Smith called here & Pearl has been after the mail. Mrs. Perkins is here yet.

**Monday 27** Have washed & ironed, moped the floor, made biscuit for supper. Sewed some. Burdett has syrupe off for the first time this spring & Willis & B. have finished setting & shod the sled. Willis & Pearl have gone to John Peebles this eve.

**Tue. 28** Baked bread & 1 custard pie & 2 apple pies. Done off 1 batch of sugar & this afternoon have been down to Mrs. Bates to get my dress cut. Burdett has syrupe off again today. The boys have gone to Almon's tonight.

**Wednesday 29** Burdett has taken Mrs. Perkins home & been up street & Willis has gone back this afternoon to E.W. Boise. Came home Saturday night. I have written to Mrs. Ed Warfield for Mrs. P. today.

**Thur. 30** Done over my old sugar. Had 2 pans full & it took me most all day. Got a letter from Ellen today. Willis gave me \$1.09 one dollar & nine cents yesterday.

**Friday 31** Done off 2 batches of sugar & made some ginger cookies & fried doughnuts. Sewed on my dress a while. Burdett has been to the mill this forenoon. He is most sick with a cold.

*To be continued*

Submitted by Doris Hayden



# The Cross Family of Huntington, Mass.

by Pam Donovan-Hall



Robert, Joseph, Edmund and Albert Cross, sons of E. H. Cross, 1917

Edmund Hosmer Cross was born in Tavoy, Burma, India, on Nov. 12, 1846, son of Edmund Burke and Julia Ann (Putnam) Cross. Both parents were Baptist missionaries.

Edmund came to this country alone at age 14 on the Great Eastern, the first ship to operate without sails and the largest side-wheeler boat of its time. Inasmuch as the Suez Canal had not been built, the voyage was made via Cape Horn, Africa. Edmund Cross stayed at the home of Rev. Rufus R. Bellamny in Chicopee Falls, Mass., and later received his degree in engineering and chemistry from Union College, Schenectady, N.Y. in 1869. After graduation, he moved to Michigan as a civil engineer in railroad construction, but after a few years returned to Massachusetts and graduated with a degree in pharmacy from Springfield College.

He came to Huntington, Mass. in 1872 and established Cross Pharmacy on the corner of

Prospect Street and Russell Road. He married Alice Rust of Huntington in 1874 and they made their home on Prospect Street. They were to have five children: Albert, Florence, Joseph, Robert and Edmund R.

In October 1879, he moved his store to the new Heath Block, occupying the left store front. This was the location of the first telephone in town in 1883. He developed a large export trade with India, making various types of medicines. By 1885, 2160 bottles and 60,000 pills had been shipped to Rangoon, Burma, India, and sent up the Sittang River to Toungoo, India. The name "E.H. Cross" was blown in the glass of the medicine bottles in the Karen language. Later, ink stamps were used on paper wrappers.

The only competition Mr. Cross encountered was that of William B. Grover of Belchertown, Mass., who opened a new drug store across the street in November 1884. Mr.

Grover's window displays caused much excitement and conversation among the townspeople. In 1885, ancient curiosities and mementos from the Revolutionary War were displayed, and the next year a stuffed rattlesnake four feet long with nine rattles, which was killed in Montgomery, caused much excitement. Mr. Grover's business prospered and he returned to his store in Belchertown, leaving his Huntington store in the hands of his clerks, Arthur Coit and Howard Gaunt. John McAvoy continued the pharmacy area.

In 1886 a new state law was passed requiring the selectmen of each town to grant a license to pharmacies in order for them to sell liquor. The selectmen of Huntington unanimously agreed to grant only one license and it was issued to Mr. Cross. Mr. Grover requested a license but his request was denied. Within the year he closed his drug store and moved to Three Rivers, Mass. His clerk, Arthur Coit, became employed by Mr. Cross, a position he later left to pursue the study of medicine.

The Cross Pharmacy continued to flourish and larger quarters were needed. In December 1893, he purchased a plot of land by the Main Street bridge and construction of the Cross Block began. This new block would be made of brick, as was the Heath Block. Years previously (1878), a fire began in one of the wooden blocks on this site and quickly spread to three other buildings. All of the stores on the west side of Main Street were destroyed.

The new block was completed in March 1894, and was said to have been a fine addition to the business part of the village. The second floor provided rental space which was used for the town library in 1900. Mr. Cross installed electricity and the town supplied the fixtures. The rent was \$35 per month which included heat. Two rooms were rented; one room was used as a reading room and the other housed the 2,000 books. In 1905, the public telephone headquarters moved from the Heath Block to a room above the Cross Pharmacy and in later years expanded their operation, using most of the second floor. The Democratic headquarters occupied a room on

the second floor in 1915.

Due to his perseverance, the town began a high school in 1900. He was a member of the school committee for a total of 42 years. Mr. Cross would leave his store twice a year and visit the schools. He talked to all the teachers as well as all the children, and became a very popular visitor. Mr. Cross was also a library trustee, a member of the State Pharmaceutical Association, Huntington Lodge of Masons, and the Baptist Church. The Huntington High School's yearbook was dedicated to him in 1921.

Over the years, Mr. Cross had loyal employees such as Homer Dickinson and Henry Brackett who learned the drug business from Mr. Cross and were employed by him for a number of years. The inventory in his store kept up with the times when sheet music was sold there in 1899 and a soda fountain was installed in 1906.

His parents died in India in 1915 only a few months apart, and Edmund was appointed executor of their wills. The estate of \$2,000 was left to Edmund, his brother, Rev. Benjamin Cross, a missionary, and his sister, Ula P. Crumb, wife of Rev. Andrew Crumb. Both were also missionaries.

By 1916, Mr. Cross was cultivating wild ginseng in town and exporting it to China. The root was used to restore lost youth, as a love potion, and to cure just about every illness imaginable. One season netted him \$1,100. He also continued to export his medicines to India.

During the summer in 1916, Mr. Cross escaped serious injury when he was hit by an automobile while crossing the street in front of his store. The driver of the vehicle sounded his horn, but Mr. Cross did not hear it and stopped in the center of the street in the path of the machine. He was hit and thrown to the ground as the driver, traveling slow, stopped immediately. He was taken into the store and Dr. Mace was summoned. He was badly scratched and sustained a sprained ankle.

Mr. Cross was a very intellectual person and an avid reader. While in his store, one could receive an education, as he was famous



for his knowledge of trivia. One could learn about any subject just by listening to the stories and conversations that always floated around the store. Mr. Cross enjoyed his annual fishing trips to Canada. He was a nice man, but one who was very blunt.

He frequently advertised his Albany Ice Cream, which was the best ice cream around. It was shipped from Albany, N.Y. by train in 10-gallon wooden tubs, packed in ice and salt. He continued to make improvements in his store and installed a new soda fountain on the river side in 1918. By this time his sons, Albert and Joseph worked in the store as well.

Edmund Cross became ill and retired in 1924, leaving both sons in charge of the business. He died on July 28, 1929 and is buried at the Norwich Bridge Cemetery. His wife died the same year and is buried next to her husband.

Mr. George Beals, age 84, was also born in town and remembers Edmund Cross. "I remember going in the drug store in the spring of the year when he was making his preparations of medicines that he shipped to India. All of his paraphernalia was out, he made it right there in the store. I don't think he made much money in the store itself, even with the prescription business. His preparation of medicine was the only thing that kept that store going, even during the Depression."

### Albert Ashley Cross

Albert Ashley Cross was born in Huntington on Jan. 31, 1876. He attended local schools and graduated from Childs' Business College in Springfield, Mass. He worked for a short time as a clerk in a drug store in Springfield, then received his degree in Pharmacology at the Massachusetts School of Pharmacy in 1908. He then joined his father at Cross Pharmacy.

He and his brother continued to operate the drug store after the death of their father. They continued to prepare their famous Cross Formula, exporting it to India. He was known to everyone as "Bert." An avid reader as well as

an ornithologist, Bert could answer any question about nature. He contributed to many scientific publications and was credited with the sighting of many rare birds never before seen in this area. Of course, the townspeople would notify Bert if they saw any strange birds and Bert would investigate. When his reports were published, he would always credit the person who had notified him in the first place. He was a member of the Huntington Lodge of Masons and of the Highland Grange.

"Everyone loved Bert Cross," says Mr. Beals. "He'd give you the shirt off his back. He was a big man and so kind to everyone. I used to deliver the ice to his store and would never leave without his offering me some ice cream. He'd see me come in and automatically ask, 'What kind will it be today?'"

Bert never married and died in April 1940 at Noble Hospital after a short illness. Mr. Beals relates, "The books that were thrown out after his death would make you sick. Some of them were very rare."

### Joseph Putnam Cross

Joseph Putnam Cross was born in Huntington on Aug. 4, 1886. After attending local schools, he entered the University at Worcester and received his druggist training in



J. P. Cross, 1943

Boston. He and his brother, Bert, carried on the drug store after the death of their father. Everyone called him "Putt," due to his middle name, and he was a veteran of World War I. He also never married.

"Putt was a small built man and was much different than Bert," remembers George Beals. "He did not have any enemies but he wasn't as friendly as Bert. He was a thrifty guy, kind of tight with his generosity. When I delivered the ice and he was there alone, I never was offered any ice cream."

After the death of Bert, Putt continued to run the drug store along. He continued to prepare the famous Cross Formula, exporting it to India until World War II, when it became impossible to obtain the special herbs used in the formula.

Putt accidentally fell on the stairs at the Cross home and died of these injuries in 1950. The Cross medical formulas died with him.

### **Florence Cross**

Florence Cross was born in Huntington in 1879, the only daughter of Edmund and Alice Cross. She was known as Flossie. She was not one to go out much and usually stayed at home. After the death of her parents, she took care of the Cross homestead and her brothers. She, too, never married. Occasionally, she did help out in the store when the medicines were made. It was her chore to wrap the grosses of bottles and pack them for their long journey to India.

Florence Cross was the last surviving member of the Cross family for many years, until her death in the 1960s.

### **Edmund R. Cross**

Another son of the Cross family was Edmund R. Cross. He moved away from home and resided in Cleveland, Ohio, San Diego, California, and Denver, Colorado. He died sometime before 1950 and it is not known if he ever married but he did not have any children.

### **Robert Packer Cross**

Robert Packer Cross was born in Huntington on June 3, 1893. He attended local schools and graduated from Huntington High School in 1911. He completed a year's post-graduate course at the Technical High School in Springfield, then entered Syracuse University. In June of 1917 he joined the officer's training camp at Madison barracks but was transferred to the aviation section and studied at the Dromed School at Ithaca, N.Y. and completed his aviation training at Toggia, Italy. He received his commission as First Lt. on March 3, 1918 and happily joined the American Expeditionary forces in France.

Robert Packer Cross died in Tours, France on May 2, 1918 at age 25, being the town's first casualty of World War I. His family was notified three days later and his body was interred in the cemetery at Tours. He was to graduate from Syracuse University the next month.

Robert Cross knew of the dangers he was undertaking but was determined to carry through his service for his country. As history tells us today, the airplanes of World War I were simply not fit for combat.

The new bridge in Huntington's downtown area was built in 1938 and dedicated as the Lt. Robert Parker Cross Bridge in 1941. More than 1500 people attended the ceremonies that consisted of a large parade, colorful bands, and speakers. The bridge was decorated with flags. Florence Cross was escorted by the parade marshals and presented with pink roses, and Putnam was escorted by the World War veterans to the bridge for the unveiling of the tablet honoring their brother. A volley and taps were sounded and the patriotic spirit prevailed. This bridge is a reminder to us all that one does not have to be a high-ranking military official to be remembered and honored. Lt. Robert Cross was one of our own.

The Robert Cross Bridge replaced the old Main Street bridge which was just east of the Cross Block. During the flood of 1938 the old bridge received much damage and this gave





**The Robert Cross Bridge**

the federal and state authorities the opportunity to design a new one. This design would affect the town and its people, but not the railroad. Many shade trees were felled, and eight homes were demolished. Some were the oldest homes in town, and numerous other buildings were destroyed. The new \$300,000 bridge was called 'progress' by the authorities but many residents did not agree. They felt, and continue to feel, that the destruction of the old Main Street bridge took the town with it. The village, they say, has never been the same and has never looked the same. The quaintness is gone. Before, the traffic went directly onto Main Street where there were many stores, but the new bridge diverted traffic from them.

It has been one hundred and twenty years since Mr. Edmund Cross opened his drug store in the village of Huntington. The Cross Block is now exactly one hundred years old. What was a fine addition to a bustling village now sits in ruins, deserted in the midst of a ghost town. The Cross homestead is not recognized, as it has changed so much over the years. The bridge is referred to as the "Big Green Bridge" downtown and not as "The

Cross Bridge." The tablet in the middle of the bridge is tarnished and weathered. It is somewhat ironic that this bridge, honoring Lt. Robert Cross, is responsible for the demise of a small village that included his family's store. The tombstone of Edmund and Alice Cross at the Norwich Bridge Cemetery is forsaken and covered with moss and lichens. There is only a small government-issued marker for Joseph "Putt" Cross placed in the ground; half is covered by dirt and grass. There is no marker or tombstone for Bert or for Florence.

The history of every town is made up of families whose roots there extend back many generations. So it is unusual when only two generations of one family create such an impact on a small town and its history as did the Cross family. They were the back-bone of our community. Everyone knew the family and was either helped, entertained or educated by them.

The entire family may be gone with nothing tangible left behind to properly represent them. However, they continue to be remembered as a family who enriched the lives of our people, our town and our history.

# An Obituary for a Little Law Office

by Doris Hayden

The Ashmun family was one of importance in Blandford. Justus Ashmun was the first of the name. He came here from New York (probably the Fort Edward area) in 1777. At first he ran what was then known as Pease Tavern. In 1779 he purchased it from Robert Pease. The tavern was located near the present blinker light at the intersection of Main Street and North Street.

Not only was it an inn for the convenience of travelers on the old Housatonic, or Albany, Road, but it was a place for other public affairs. A number of cold, March town meetings were adjourned to "Justus Arshman's." Also many "vandues" or auctions were held there.

Justus was appointed to Blandford's Committee of Inspection and Safety on April 3, 1775. He was in the same office in 1779 and 1780. He was chosen to represent the town at the Concord Convention for the regulation of depreciated currency. In 1782 he was one of a committee to supply the pulpit. Blandford evidently soon realized that he was a man of ability.

His family was large, consisting of his wife, Keziah, four sons and four daughters. One son, Eli Porter Ashmun, was born June 24, 1770, before the family came to Blandford. He studied Law with Judge Sedgwick of Stockbridge for four years. In 1794 his father deeded two acres, more or less, to Eli. He built a fine house located at the corner of Main Street and the present Russell Road. It stood in front of our post office and town office. There he practiced law in his little law office erected in the yard of the house and taught a number of young men the intricacies of law.

Two sons were born here, John Hooker Ash-



"Little Law Office"

mun and George. John Hooker was born July 3, 1800. He attended Williams College for three years and graduated from Harvard in 1818. He, too, was a lawyer and became the head of the Northampton Law School. Later he was appointed Professor of Law at the Dane Law School of Harvard, the first to occupy the chair founded by Isaac Royall. He was a brilliant man. His untimely death occurred April 1, 1833.

The other son of Eli P. Ashmun was George, born Dec. 25, 1804. He graduated from Yale in 1823. Following his father's footsteps, he became a lawyer. In 1830 he was in Springfield in partnership with Reuben Atwater Chapman, a Russell native.

George became a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives four times — 1834, 1835, 1836 and 1841. He was Speaker of the House the last year. He was twice elected to the Massachusetts Senate, in 1838 and 1839. He also served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives — 1846 to 1851. He worked for the continuation of the



railroad from Springfield to Albany and was also strongly opposed to slavery. In 1860 he became permanent chairman of the Chicago Convention which nominated Abraham Lincoln.

On the night when President and Mrs. Lincoln were to leave the White House for the theater, George Ashmun arrived with a friend. Lincoln invited them to be his guests at the theater, but they had another engagement. So Mr. Lincoln wrote a note: "Allow Mr. Ashmun and friend to come in at 9:00 A.M. tomorrow." Lincoln was assassinated that night. Probably those were the last words Lincoln ever wrote.

To go back to Eli Porter Ashmun's house and law office, the fine old house was torn down (1955?) to make room for a filling station. The filling station is also now gone. The law office had long since been removed to a spot behind a house now standing at the corner of Main Street and the present Wyman Road. In the course of years it was the rented home of some single men, a playhouse for the neighboring children, and was probably used for storage space.

In mid-October of 1992 the building was demolished. So farewell to the last bit of Ashmun history.

## Henry's Place

*by Rev. Walter E. Fitch, Jr.*

In the '40s, our family had a chicken business, selling fresh-killed White Rocks to our customers. Dad had, at one time, 200 plus of these succulent birds and one feisty rooster, whom we named Henry. The flock now numbered 100. Henry ran a tight ship as he reigned over the birds. Each hen was twice as large as he was. Henry was a runt who brooked no rebellion in the coop, administering all the punishment necessary to quell it.

One day, our milkman noted to my father that the rooster did not look well. He mentioned that he had a pair of very large roosters, White Rocks, who would be an asset for the well-being of Dad's hens. Dad responded by purchasing the pair. In a couple of days, they were delivered. Quickly, the were introduced to the chicken yard. Immediately, some of the hens ran into the coop, where Henry was located. Henry came out like a speeding bullet. Even though the White

Rock roosters had very large "fighting" spurs on their legs, the incumbent "spurless" runty Rhode Island Red went after them both. Climbing on one of the alien's backs, Henry grabbed its comb, and beat that rooster so badly that we had to remove him, and he ended up that day in a chicken soup. The hens also helped our valiant Henry by attacking the other rooster.

During the following two weeks, the surviving White Rock gentleman led a life of dread. Every time he tried to feed or drink, Henry and his hens would drive him away. He was reduced to a "ghost" of his former self. His once proud posture and stance gone, he was losing weight rapidly, and his fate was to end in the same pot that housed his partner two weeks before. The story closes as a minuscule rooster named Henry scolds his hens into submission, as before.

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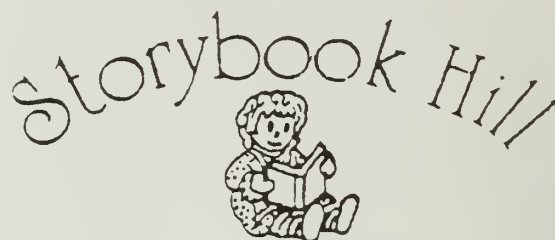
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*"There are the generations who sleep in ancient graveyards under names that the rains have washed away behind stone walls tumbled by the frost of two centuries."*

—Charles McCarry  
"Home of the Enduring Bershires"  
*National Geographic*, August, 1970  
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